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ABSTRACT

According to psychologist Daniel Goleman, a strong IQ can set the baseline for success but does not guarantee prosperity. Goleman believes that factors contributing to "emotional intelligence" (for example, self-control, zeal and persistence, and ability to motivate oneself) are key to success in the corporate world. Howard Gardner has identified seven types of intelligence. Two of them intrapersonal intelligence (having true understanding of oneself) and interpersonal intelligence (understanding others) have implications for leadership. In 1990, Mayer and Salovey defined emotional intelligence as a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. The findings of research in the field of the neurophysiology of the emotions suggest that people can become effective leaders by learning to combine the strengths of their "thinking or rational brain" with those of their "emotional brain." Goleman has suggested the following domains for emotional intelligence: (1) knowing one's emotions; (2) managing one's emotions; (3) motivating oneself; (4) recognizing emotions in others; and (5) handling relationships. The next logical step is to move from review of the literature to research. This step will be accomplished by studying public school principals in Mississippi. (22 references) (MN)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Increasing Organizational Productivity through Heightened Emotional Intelligence

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Introduction

"What factors are at play, for example, when people of high IQ flounder and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well?" Author and renowned psychologist Daniel Goleman believes these factors are attributed to abilities called *emotional intelligence* which include self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself" (Goleman, 1995). In America's corporate workplace today, a certain level of intelligence is the expectation for the demanding jobs of top executive leaders. However, only a select few seem to manage to become 'star performers' while others, many times with higher IQ's become stagnate.

Goleman, in his book entitled Emotional Intelligence – Why it can matter more than IQ shares many of his ideas as the result of scientific studies conducted over the last 20 years. Goleman purports that although a strong IQ can set the baseline for success in life, it in no way is a guarantee of prosperity. Academic intelligence, as Goleman shares "offers no preparation for the turmoil – or opportunity life's vicissitudes bring." This is an interesting concept in light of the way society as a whole focuses on and rewards academic intellect in our schools and cultures, (Goleman, 1995).

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When we are obligated to make decisions based on intellect alone, without the aid of our emotions, in many cases we make very poor judgments. During the course of this paper a brief overview of the neurophysiological connectedness of the emotions in our brain to our intellectual brain will be discussed. It should, at that point be evident how our emotions, when intact can improve our decision-making process. In the course of that discussion, we will talk about our two minds and how they might work best together. One familiar example of an intellectual use of the emotions comes in Stephen Covey's national best seller The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1989). In this book, Covey encourages readers to *listen* with *empathy* (Covey, 1989), thus utilizing one of our basal senses through emotional intelligence. It is from this platform, the interaction of both minds, the intellectual with the rational, that a dialogue for the implications of the benefits of being an emotionally intelligent leader evolves.

Star performers, emphasized in Goleman's second work on emotional intelligence entitled Working with Emotional Intelligence, refers to those performers in an organization who not only get the job done, but rise to the top of their field while doing so. Goleman's 'star performers' are congenial, realistic, and optimistic. Not only do they have their fair share of cognitive intelligence, but they possess emotional intelligence as well (Murray, 1998). The exciting part is that unlike IQ, emotional intelligence (EQ) can be learned. So, what exactly is emotional intelligence and how can it be attained or improved?

What is Emotional Intelligence?

The question, 'what is emotional intelligence' must first be answered with a response about what it is not. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is not some warm-fuzzy, quasi-science only to be appreciated or understood or appreciated by those in the field of tarot card reading, stargazing or some apocalyptic social psychology field. Emotional Intelligence, the softer side of our intelligences has considerable implications for the field of leadership. To connect those implications to leadership, a person must first understand how emotional intelligence evolves in the brain. From that context, we will begin by looking at the neurology of the brain and how our emotions drive much of our behavior, both personally and professionally.

The beginnings of emotional intelligence as a science dates back to the early 1920's in the roots of 'social intelligence,' first recognized by E. L. Thorndike. Intelligences at that time were classified primarily into three groups, abstract intelligence, concrete intellegence and social intelligence. In his definition, Thorndike characterized social intelligence as "the ability to understand and manage men and women, girls and boys – to act wisely in human relations" (Thorndike, 1920).

More currently, psychologist and Harvard University professor Howard Gardner has identified seven distinct types of intelligence. In his book Frames of Mind (1983), Gardner disputed the idea that there was one all-encompassing intelligence quotient, but that many types of intelligence were essential for success in life (Goleman, 1995). Among Gardner's seven intelligences are two intelligences that are the underpinnings

of the research on *emotional* intelligence. These two intelligences, *intra*personal intelligence (one having a true understanding of oneself) and *inter*personal intelligence (understanding others) both have implications for leadership. In fact, in that regard, Gardner defines interpersonal intelligence as "the ability to understand what motivates people to do work and how to work cooperatively with them" (Cornell University website, Sept. 2002).

In 1990, Mayer and Salovey defined emotional intelligence as a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to moitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. In his book, Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence, Mayer defines emotional intelligence as 'the capacity to reason with emotion in four areas: to percieve emotion, to integrate it into thought, to understand it and to manage it" (Mayer, 1999). Mayer further states that "emotional intelligence broadens our understanding of what it means to be smart."

Most recently, Daniel Goleman defines emotional intelligence, as mentioned earlier, as a blend of Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Goleman believes that "softer skills such as empathy, intuition, self- and social-awareness are what distinguish *great* leaders and *successful* companies" (Time Magazine). So, where do these 'softer' skills come from?

Is our brain truly divided into two regions – a thinking or rational brain, and a separate emotional one? If so, could we be more effective leaders by combining the

strengths of each? We will begin to look at that notion with a brief overview in the neurology of the human brain.

Neurophysiology of the Emotions

"The most primitive part of the brain, shared with all species that have more than a minimal nervous system, is the brainstem surrounding the top of the spinal cord. This root brain regulates basic life functions like breathing and the metabolism of the body's other organs, as well as controlling stereotyped reactions and movements" (Goleman, 1995). The emotional centers are also derived from this most basal part of the brain, the brainstem. The neocortex, or thinking brain as we know it now, evolved millions of years later from this root part, the great mass of complex tissues that make up the top layers. This relationship (that the 'thinking' brain has grown from the 'emotional' one) "reveals much about the relationship of thought to feeling; there was an emotional brain long before there was a rational one" (Goleman, 1995).

The neocortex is not only responsible for our rational thoughts, but it also coordinates the messages our senses deliver. The neocortex makes us a truly great thinking species, because not only can it synthesize our emotions, but it can even allow us to have feelings about our feelings (Goleman, 1995).

In the more basal area of our brains, right above the brainstem are two structures known as the amygdala and the limbic system. It is in these structures (primarily) that our senses are housed. This has been evidenced over time as persons have for one reason or another had these areas either detached or removed completely. Without these areas,

a person can still think, but no longer has the emotional judgment to make sound decisions.

> "Lacking emotional weight, encounters loose their hold. One young man whose amygdala had been surgically removed to control severe seizures became completely uninterested in people, preferring to sit in isolation with no human contact. While he was perfectly capable of conversation, he no longer recognized close friends, relatives, or even his mother, and remained impassive in the face of their anguish at his indifference. Without an amygdala he seemed to have lost all recognition of feeling, as well as any feeling about his feelings. The amygdala acts as a storehouse of emotional memory, and thus of significance itself; life without the amygdala is a life stripped of personal meanings" (Goleman, 1995).

As we read the above scenario, we may recognize that we have 'feelings' about that situation. In some regards, we take great pride in this notion, that we 'feel' for others. But in other ways, sometimes our 'feelings' seem to disable us. How can we feel this obvious polarization about our emotions? If we return to the primal brain, where our emotional thought is housed, we can find that answer. Among the most basic of our thinking is the well known "fight or flight" mechanism. The "fight or flight" mechanism is not something we rationalize about. We hear a gunshot, we hit the ground or run. We do not rationalize, 'what was that noise ... I believe it was a gun blast ... it might have been a car backfiring ... or someone dropping a book.' You are driving down a tree-

lined country road and a deer bounds out immediately in front of your car. Do you think … "should I try to dodge the deer to the left toward the center of the road … should I slam on my brakes … should I scream?" No, you react quickly. In scenarios like the above, we react first, then we begin to rationalize. On these occasions, our emotional brain actually temporarily 'hijacks' our rational brain. It is a necessary survival mechanism. The primitive brain is not concerned with whether or not a car backfired, messing up the paint on your car, or injuring the deer. The primitive brain, where our emotions are housed, is interested in the most primal of things. "Is this something I am afraid of? Is this something that can hurt me?" When it is called upon to act, the response may be flight, or tears, or even hilarious laughter. To further complicate things, closely located to the amygdala are the centers for the hormone norepinephrine or adrenaline. When you are frightened the amygdala sends a rush of adrenaline straight to your brain creating an INSTANT and intense reaction.

So, let's take this rudimentary neurophysiology lesson a step further. Leave your thought about the basal brain behind and fast forward a few million years to the neocortex. The great neocortex is recognized to have four basic areas. The front part of that great mass commonly referred to as the frontal lobe is located just above and behind your eyebrows. It is in this area that our working memory resides, where all our learning is stored.

> "All the emotional centers that control moods like anxiety or anger have very strong connections to the prefrontal areas. So, if a child is chronically anxious or angry or upset in some way, he experiences that as intruding thoughts. He can't keep his mind off the thing he is worried about. Now working memory has a limited attention capacity. So, to the extent that it is occupied by these intrusive thoughts, it shrinks what's available in working memory to think about what you are trying to learn. (Goleman, 1995).

Think of that in terms of professional productivity. You have a staff member designated to attend a new and highly technical software training. Just before this staff member leaves to go to the training, she is confronted by a subordinate who is angry about a reduced payroll check. There is a heated discussion between the two of them prior to the time the staff member leaves to go to the training. You can readily see that the employee going to the training will not be as capable of learning all of the new training due to the fact that her emotional brain will be occupying so much of the space needed for learning.

You can begin to see the implications for learning how to effectively utilize our emotions. If the staff member that was just verbally attacked is able to acknowledge she just received an overdose of adrenaline (is indeed trained in that part of self-awareness), she can better begin to refocus her thoughts on the pending training. So, how does this knowledge lead to improving leadership? Well, the relationship plays out in several ways. First, let's define those.

Traits/Domains of Emotional Intelligence

In Goleman's second work on Emotional Intelligence entitled Working with Emotional Intelligence (1998), he suggests five domains for emotional intelligence. They are as follows:

1. Knowing one's own emotions. Goleman implies that self-awareness, that is recognizing a feeling as it happens, is the keystone to emotional intelligence.
2. Managing one's emotions. Handling feelings so they are appropriate. An *ability* that builds on self awareness.
3. Motivating oneself. Containing, ordering or controlling emotions while working toward a goal is critical for attention-paying, mastery and creativity. Being able to delay gratification and stifle impulses, having emotional self-control, underlies accomplishment of every sort.
4. Recognizing emotions in others. One of the most fundamental people skills is to have empathy, the ability to recognize other's feelings based on having had similar feelings yourself.
5. Handling relationships. Simply stated, "The art of relationships is skill in managing emotions in others."

More thoughts from Daniel Goleman

Goleman believes that a certain level of cognitive intelligence gets a person in the door, so to speak. As mentioned earlier, a certain level of GRE score along with other cognitive intelligence measures allows graduate students entry into many academic programs of study. And although a baseline intellectual level is needed for success in any field, Goleman argues, with emotional intelligence a person can thrive. Let emphasis be given here to the following point. Emotional Intelligence is in **no way** to be considered as a substitute for intellectual intelligence. However, it can truly be a compliment to IQ

which can in fact, propel those with a baseline intelligence into a position at the top in a given position. In Goleman's studies of approximately 500 organizations, people who score highest on measures of Emotional Intelligence* (or have what is called a high EQ), rise to the top of corporations (APA Monitor, July 1998).

Goleman would argue (and in fact has) in his interview in Educational Leadership (Sept, 1996), that "IQ contributes, at best, about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success. That leaves about 80 percent to everything else." Think of all the people you have known in a lifetime that were extremely intelligent cognitively, but were not successful in either their professional or personal lives.

Implications for Further Study

The next logical step in this process is to move from review of literature to research. The strategy to be implemented will be a collection of data from CEO's of public schools in Mississippi. This study will include a multiple regression analysis of data collected from the following selected schools in Mississippi. Principals of schools from districts where an academic ranking of either Level 2 or Level 5 were cited will be included in the target population. In Mississippi, schools with a ranking of Level 2 are considered by the state to be performing below an acceptable level and are in danger of loosing local control to the state. Level 5 schools on the other hand have been regarded as exemplary by the state. Principals of these respective schools will be asked to take a brief and anonymous test of Emotional Intelligence. Along with the test will be survey

questions asking respondents to identify years employed in that particular school as a principal, total years as a principal, gender, race, and University or College from which the principal was granted the degree that allowed for certification. This final piece of criteria will allow the researcher to test for relationships between IQ (if the granting institution had baseline GRE or GPA entry scores) and EQ. The other factors will also be analyzed for possible relationships. Feedback will be given to participants requesting that information. The researcher will look for relationships supporting this notion that leaders with higher emotional intelligence have organizations that are more productive.

Conclusion

So, how does Emotional Intelligence help one to be a successful leader? "People are beginning to realize that success takes more than intellectual excellence or technical prowess ... Internal qualities such as resilience, initiative, optimism, and adaptability are taking on a new valuation" (Goleman, 1998). Having a cognitively intellectual knowledge about one's emotional self is the beginning. It would be difficult to exhibit the other domains of emotional intelligence without this foundational intelligence in regard to oneself. Beyond that, building on the other competencies or domains, (empathy, self-discipline, and initiative) has been proven to distinguish the most successful leaders from those who were only good enough to maintain their jobs (McClelland, 1973).

* A website with a brief test to determine your current EQ can be found at www.utne.com/azEQ.tmpl

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